

Dear Jim,

enclosed letter to Crewdson

12/2/75

I haven't flipped in doing this nor am I expressing the anger I did feel. It is essential if he and I are to work together. If he can't get over it, I'm better off finding out immediately.

(Before I forget, he said that Hedrick Smith, national editor, not he, decided there is no story in Post Mortem. But Smith is the one Mo says is interested. John's explanation was that I did not name the assassin, therefore no story. He later, forgetting this, argued that it is impossible in the JFK case but quite possible in the King case.)

This is the second time John has called me at night and kept me from sleeping. If I can't take a nap today I'm going to be very tired for tonight's call. Each time he was personally insulting and each time he said things that would insult the intelligence of a child. Or, he can't deal with his hangups, not uncommon in good young reporters who haven't adjusted to what keeping the job means.

I can't have this now because my health won't take it. We can't have it because it is an impediment to what is now possible.

This is not the first time I've turned the Times on nor the first by indirection after Washington killed the story. However, this time Washington is in on the story, and that in itself makes added problems.

However, I think this time the Times in New York is serious and maybe Washington, which will have its own hangups, may also be.

So, it will be that they work with me or they don't. (They have enough that I gave Mo anyway.) But if Crewdson can't play it straight and not nag me with the pangs of his own conscience I'm not going to be able to work with him. They'll then either ignore me or Mo will keep in touch.

Mo, who is fond of Crewdson, told me long ago that he'd get lost in and not understand Post Mortem. I spoke to Mo after Crewdson phoned me with a give-away irrelevant question. He'll have less trouble with Frame-Up, which he was both reading and misreading last night. He professed great admiration for the first three chapters, which he'd read, yet insisted I'd said Ray was a conscious conspirator. When I got him to read the words back they did not say this at all.

While I can't tell you now, we've already had a considerable success if there is no story. The timing is perfect. Regardless of how John takes my letter, the probabilities are that they'll do a good story. One thing they are working on is farout but would be a sensation if it proves out. So much so that I've been his devil's advocate on it to keep him from going to far too fast. Remind me of the first part of this graf and 1970 for when we are before Green on this.

People inside the government are beginning to get scared. This means that each will take his own way of currying favor with the press.

And don't forget the possibility of competition with CBS.

Hastily.

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
12/2/75

Mr. John Crewdson
The New York Times
1920 L St., NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear John

Despite what did and didn't happen with Post Mortem I'll help you any way I can. But I think you'd better understand me better and I suggest perhaps yourself, too.

I agree with you - nay, you agree with me on the ~~pts~~ potential of the King of the live-defendant case. I told Mo Sunday how early I recognized it and how I went about bringing it to where it now is, the latter slightly. I can help more than I have but not until I know the direction all of you are taking and that it does not, as did CBS, give me a conflict of interest. I also have no intention of giving the New York Times or anyone else any of this work gratis except where in my opinion it will help the Ray defense. I went farthur with ^{Mo} Sunday in confidence so he could work the story better and I have no doubt he'll keep this confidence. If he doesn't at this point and prematurely starts fishing around, including in Memphis, quite a few people may be defenseless as King was in the face of real danger. I have never in Memphis taken a single step toward solving the crime, but that I didn't get some ideas and perhaps help. Despite having at least three cases in hand of prior knowledge and the certainty of getting still another tonight. All first person, all on tape.

If the Times wants this there are many normal ways in can get it. It can use the book-publishing subsidiary through which it set Belin's nausea in type and then spread the vomit all over its uncritical pages. I know what the potential is because I've had movie approaches where they chickened out.

Without something like this I remain persuaded that the only way to break the case is to exculpate Ray and put that pressure on government. With it it would probably still be the best way for a number of reasons. It took me years of the most painful experience to come to understand this and the media are the major certainty in it. The Times in particular. What you are working on now the Times would not touch with more than one approach from me. The difference is that Mo and I met. This was all before that. And it was all written out, in detail, with more than enough proof attached. And what the hell else was Horrook to have phoned me back about as recently as last week?

I was preparing for bed when you phoned last night. I am sick, whether or not I show it. It can be a dangerous illness. I run some risks but I am trying to take care. Nonetheless, if you think I can help call me whatever the hour. Only don't bullshit me with childish justifications and needless insults as you did last night. I know about editors and policies from long before you were born. A friendly city editor taught me by telling me where to sell a story he knew the paper would not touch and thus I became a by-line, syndicated feature writer before I was 20. And any time you want to choke on your words on assassinations and the Times let me know. Or check the index under Belin and McMillan and on anniversary dates, especially the 10th on JFK. The Times has been a propagandist as well as failing journalistically on the story if it has not also constituted itself an unofficial arm of government (policy) on the story. Not because its reporters could not have done the job.

The Times' re-investigation of the JFK assassination began the day it fired Stanley Kauffman and with me. It was sabotaged from inside, in part by some of the assignments to the crew. I then had only four copies of my second book. The Times had

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ond. The reason I have that Hoover press release in Post Mortem is partly because in it he answered charges not public and in that manuscript then not yet in the printer's hands. If I am not mistaken the one copy I did not get back is the one I gave the Times. Question: how did Hoover know? The times is not the only possibility. None of what I sent my London agent by first-class mail ever reached him.

It was insulting to tell me I was giving you a hard-luck story when I was trying to tell you that until Jim Lesar came along I was all alone and with and without him there has been neither time nor resources. This means we have to decide what at any time we think is the ~~best~~ course most likely to be productive. Despite your fluctuating concepts of importances and news by and large we have been both right and unselfish. One example is that after a very long time Jim is only now taking steps to collect money owed. Despite the fact that neither of us has any regular income. Our wives work part-time. How would you like to try to do the amount of work I have done for 12 years with no income and be told by the man who will be paid for your giving it to him what you told me? Especially in the particular context, where you are bullshitting me about there being no news in Post Mortem. There would have been if it had not been handled by the national desk. Especially when I realized the bulk alone would discourage you, the subject was too foreign and technical for you, and I had taken the time to list pages with documents you could use by themselves. I still have the list. I've saved it for radio calls.

This gets me to the reminder of illness. The adrenalin, which I told you turns on to keep me going, charged up too much last night. Even the prescribed sleeping pills didn't work after that. In the past I'd not have cared but now I want to reserve anything that can delay or impede the fullest recovery possible for what can be useful. So please don't go in for the extraneously insulting, especially so close to a long Times Sunday piece so total a disproof of what you try to argue. (Phelan's two Sunday issues ago. I haven't seen it but I've received copies of letters to the Times on it.) There is no need (unless you have the need) to try to justify what can't be justified journalistically to me to get me to help. Why else do you think I've spent the past dozen years as I have?

My only reservations on this have nothing to do with any writing I plan on the King assassination. I plan none. This does not mean that I do not have to try to live and work without income or that I must give away what can serve this purpose if it does not have to be done for any immediate purpose. I will give you and Mo, whether or not exclusively, what I get by the suit for the FBI's King materials. The same stuff no reporter or paper would go to the trouble of seeking this way.

While I'm at it, because I don't expect to keep writing you letters like this, I'll explain something else I resented and something that as a reporter I think you should think about, the Belin bit. I addressed this in part last time I wrote you by thanking you for giving the signals I needed. First I held a well-reported press conference (aside from major papers) in which I charged perjury and its subornation and dared those I named to get head-to-head under oath on it. I did this the Friday before I confronted Belin. I then wrote a speech, and I rarely do this, laying out Belin's record of exactly this and read it to his face. To this I added the evidence he suppressed in his ~~xxx~~ are of work and Ball's, enough to walk a defendant in any fair court, and to that I added enough samples of the Commission's suppressions of the most essential of evidence and of what it avoided entirely. He already had and had begun to read Post Mortem. He got it from me and I rushed his order so he would. You may not agree that this combination forced his change of position and his going public on it a couple of days later. But what the hell did you expect him to do except proclaim his purity and say any investigation would exonerate the Commission when he knew exactly the opposite?

The Times knew he was lying. So did the Post and the wire services. And deep down in your good reporter's heart so did you. But nobody was in any way critical in any reporting, no single reporter checked with a source on the other side. Especially the one every paper knew had just issued this unusual challenge?

I don't take this time to ~~give~~ give you hell. If I had to get that out of my system there are others deserving of it. I have two purposes. One is success. If the Times can do what you are about I'll be happy about it. I want all this that can be cleaned up cleaned up as soon as possible. The other is perhaps avuncular. I think you need to out your head together on all of this and learn to live with the problems of being a reporter. I have never said anything just to insult you, here or earlier. When I told you you were being had on the Nonseko story I had the proof. I didn't give it to you because I was content for your corrupt or corrupted sources to use you as they did and because I hope to return to that well-started book laid aside five or six years ago. When I told you that sugar was the wrong Mexican connection on Watergate I not only knew it but also had pretty substantial additional fact as well as solidly-based suspicions of a much larger story. If someone gave you that lead I suggest you have a new lead - why?

Good luck to you, Mo, Horrock and anyone else on this story.

Sincerely,